THE

Covenant-Interest

AND

PRIVILEGE

OF

BELIEVERS and their INFANTS

Clearly Demonstrated

IN A

LETTER

TO A

RELIGIOUS LADY.

By a Minister of the Gospel.

LONDON,

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ADAM,

THe Propoſition which I ſhall lay down, and prove to you out of the Sacred Scriptures, is this; That the *Covenant* of Grace under the new Adminiſtration of it, comprehends viſible Believ- and their Infants: Or thus, The Covenant ndeth not only to the believing Parent, but his, or her *Infant ſeed* alſo. That we may nt miſtakes, we muſt here diſtinguiſh be- *fœdus internum* and *externum*: Or thus may apprehend it; The Covenant of Grace be either ſtrictly conſidered as an *abſolute* miſe of ſaving Grace, and ſo none but the e- are in *Covenant* with God: Or the Covenant be conſidered more largely, in reſpect of nal Adminiſtration, or outward privi- es; and ſo the *Covenant* in a true Scripture- e, may be ſaid viſibly to comprehend and be- to many perſons that ſhall not be infallibly d; viſible Believers and their Infants do belong to the *Covenant*, or the *Covenant* be- to them: All that are members of the vi- Church of Chriſt, have a viſible right and eſt in the Covenant of Grace; the *Covenant* ngs to them in *facie viſibilis Eccleſiæ*. Now are members of the viſible Church of l, who are not real members of the myſti-

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cal, invisible body of Christ: Many are branches of Christ the Vine in outward appearance, *Joh.* 15. 2. who wither and are cut off, thus it was with *Judas*, *Simon Magus*, *Demas* and those of whom the Apostle *John* speaks, *They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: But they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* 1 John 2. 19. This is a point that some Professors of the Gospel seem to startle at; namely That Infants should be reckoned and reputed to have a visible interest in the Covenant of Grace, and to be members of the visible Church of Christ, and to receive the Seal of their membership in their Infancy: But there are others (and my self amongst them) that look at the Covenant of Grace, as far more desireable and comfortable in this respect; because it extends not only to Believers, but to their Infants.

For the better clearing and confirming the *Covenant-interest of Believers Infants*, I shall propound some serious *Considerations*.

First, Consider (I beseech you) that ever since God made a Covenant with his people, Infants were included and comprehended in the Covenant with their Parents, and were reputed and reckoned to belong to the Family and Kingdom of God, in opposition and contradistinction to the rest of the world, which is the Kingdom of Satan. For indeed, either the Infants of the Godly do visibly belong to the Kingdom of God, or they visibly belong to the Kingdom of Satan, there being no other visible

Kingdo

Kingdom beſides theſe two, which they can
late unto: In thoſe *Covenants* which concern
al affairs, it is an uſual thing to include chil-
ren, though the children themſelves do not
ſually *ſeal*, or give their actual conſent to
ch a *Grant* or Leaſe, together with their Pa-
nts; where hath God at any time made a
ovenant with any of his people, but that Co-
nant did alſo comprehend their children and
oſterity? The Lord made a Covenant with
ah, *Gen.* 9. and that *Covenant* did alſo reach
s Poſterity; he made a *Covenant* with *Abra-*
m, *Gen.* 17. and that Covenant did alſo reach
s Poſterity; he made a Covenant with *Phine-*
s, *Numb.* 25. which did alſo reach his Poſte-
y; God made a *Covenant* with *David*, *Pſal.*
9, 28. and this alſo did extend to his Poſteri-
. Yea it is evident that the Parents owning
e *Covenant*, was reckoned not only as owning
for themſelves, but alſo for their children;
ough the children themſelves (whileſt Infants)
d not actually conſent to the *Covenant* in their
n perſons.

Secondly, Conſider further, that the Infants of
lievers were once reckoned and reputed to
long viſibly to the *Covenant* and Church of
d, and did receive the Seal of their admiſſion
to the Church of God. (I ſpeak not here
ly or chiefly of a particular, viſible Church,
of the univerſal, viſible Church:) The
ſt ingenious and judicious of our diſſenting
thren will acknowledge this, that Infants
once viſibly belong to the *Covenant* and King-
n of God; well then, the Infants of Gods

people were once visibly in *Covenant*, and mem-
bers of the Church of God: Now where do w
find that this [fœderal or *Covenant-interest* as
Church-membership of Infants was ever repea
ed, or made void by the constitution of God
It concerns those that dissent from us to pro
that it is made void; we have the *Negative* her
let our Brethren prove the *Affirmative* if the
can; Namely, that the *Species* of Infants is ca
out of the *Covenant* and Church of God. Ce
tainly Infants are now as capable of a visib
Covenant-interest and Church-membership,
they formerly were; and it is no priviledge
a Believer to have his children cast out of Go
visible Family and Kingdom.

That I may confirm this to you, and silen
the contrary objections; let us observe these
or seven particulars. 1. If there had been su
a repeal of the *Covenant-interest* and Churc
membership of Believers Infants, now in t
days of the New Testament, doubtless it wou
have been mentioned in the Scriptures of t
New Testament; seeing it is clearly held for
in the Old Testament, that Believers Infa
were sometimes visibly in *Covenant* with Go
and members of his visible Church: *I will b
God to thee, and to thy Seed.* Gen. 17.7. A
God entered into *Covenant* not only with t
Parents, but with their *little ones*, as plainly a
pears, *Deut.* 29. 10. 11. 12. Where we find t
children taken into *Covenant* with their Paren
Let not any pretend, that this was a privile
proper only to the *Jews* and their children un
that *pædagogical* Administration; for Infa

ere Church members long before *Circumcision* s instituted, and they were ſo in the *Wilder-ſs* when *Circumcision* was omitted; yea, and is privilege of Church-membership, did not ly belong to the natural Jews and their chil-ren, but alſo to the *Gentile* Proſelytes, who ned the God of *Iſrael*, to them and their ildren. 2. If this privilege were abrogated, d taken away from the Infants of Believers, rely God would have beſtowed as good or tter in the place of it: But where do we find the Book of God that he hath done ſo? In-ed we find that ſome of the Branches, *to wit*, *Jews*; they and their children were broken by unbelief from the viſible Church: *Rom.* 17. But it was not all the *Jews:* For as aching the believing *Jews* and their children, y were not broken off, but did ſtill remain in *Olive* tree; nor do we find one word or ſyl-ble in the Scriptures, that makes for the repeal d abrogation of the Covenant-right and hurch-membership of Believers children. 3. hriſt came not to put Believers and their chil-en in a worſe condition than they were before. that would not accuſe the woman taken in dultery, but asked her where her accuſers re: *John* 8. 10. 11. Will he (who is ſo com-ſſionate and tender-hearted) caſt all Infants t of his viſible Kingdom without accuſation? ubtleſs it is a far worſe condition to be out of viſible Church of God than in it: For or-arily (what God may do in an extraordinary I queſtion not) there is no ſalvation to be had in the viſible Church of Chriſt: This is the

family of Christ; this is the house of God: 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. And the Lord is said to *add to the Church such as should be saved*: *Acts* 2. 47. And they that do not belong to Christs visible Kingdom, are said to be *Aliens and Strangers from the Common-wealth of Israel, and the Covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Ephes.* 2. 12. 4. *The Kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ*: *Rev.* 11. 15. Which undoubtedly is meant of the visible Church of Christ, in respect of visible Church-membership, Ordinances and Privileges; and if so, how can we otherwise think, but that this Kingdom will include and take in the *Species* of Infants, as members thereof? It is also propheſied *Dan.* 2. 34. 35. That the little stone cut out without hands (which is meant of the visible Kingdom of Christ) though it be small at first, yet in the later days it shall become a great Mountain, and fill the whole earth; which certainly will comprehend the Infants of Believers: Yea, and when the Jews are re-ingrafted into the Olive tree, their children shall be re-ingrafted with them, and shall be as aforetime: *Rom.* 11. 24. 25. *Jer.* 30. 20. By what I have already said, it is evident that the Covenant interest and Church-membership of Infants is not abrogated. 5. If the children of Believers now should be excluded from visible Church-membership and interest in the Covenant, they would be in worse condition than the very children of the Gentiles were before the coming of Christ. For in the times of the Old Testament, if a Gentile or stranger did accept the Covenant

ind own the God of *Israel*, not only he, but his children also were admitted members of the Church, and reckoned to belong to the Covenant and Kingdom of God. But according to the opinion of our dissenting Brethren, if now the Parent accept the Covenant, he himself indeed shall be admitted, but his Infant-seed shall not be admitted to a visible member-ship of the Church of Christ; so that we are in a worse case in this respect, than the Gentile Proselytes were in the time of the Old Testament. 6. The Lord hath said *Exod.* 20. *That he will shew mercy to thousands of them that love and obey him*; which certainly extends to the children of the Faithful, so far as to admit and entitle them to a visible Member-ship of his Church: Doth God take care of Oxen; are the very hairs of our head numbered by him, and will he not (think you) visibly own, and bless the poor Infants of his people who are so dear to him? 7. There are Gospel Prophecies and promises which relate to the children and Seed of the godly: The Psalmist tells us, that the Seed of the righteous are blessed. *Psal.* 37. 26. *I will pour out my Spirit* (saith the Lord) *upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Offspring, and they shall spring up as among the Grass. Isaiah* 44. 3, 4. The Lord speaking of his people in Gospel times saith, that *he will make an everlasting Covenant with them, and their Seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their Offspring among the people, all that see them shall acknowledge them that they are the Seed which the Lord hath blessed. Isaiah.* 61. 8. 9. And again Chapter 65. 17, 18, 19, 20. The Lord

The Lord saith, there shall be no more an Infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days, for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed, and verse 23. *These are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their off-spring with them.* It is also propheci-ed, *Isai.* 49. 22. of the times of the Gospel, how God *will lift up his hand to the Gentiles, and set up his standard to the people, and they shall bring their sons in their Arms, and their daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.* And is it not evident from these and the like Prophetical expressions in the holy Scriptures, that there are external visible priviledges of the Covenant and Gospel of Christ belonging to the seed of the Godly, which do not belong to others?

Thirdly, Let us consider, that whosoever denies the *visible* Church-membership and Covenant-interest of Believers *Infants*, and holds that the *Covenant* of Grace doth not visibly belong to such *Infants*, leaves *Parents* without any visible ground of hope touching the justification and salvation of their Children that die in *Infancy*, I say visible ground of hope. As for Gods *eternal* election, or the *will* of his purpose, this is a *secret* thing, *and secret things belong to God, but revealed things belong to us and our Children, Deut.* 29. 29. If we hold not that the *species* of Infants do visibly belong to the Covenant and Church of God: It will then follow that there is no visible ground of hope concerning them: No man, woman, or child doth or can appear to us to be a *member* of the *invisible* Church and mystical body of Christ, unless it be declared by God in his word, or else by

by the *visible* profession and conversation of the party, that he or she belongs to the visible Church of Christ. In the prosecution of this, three things may be noted, (1) That sound *hope* and charity are regulated and guided by Judgment, they must be grounded upon the *Rule* of Gods word, and our judgment must have some Scripture evidence to proceed on, or else it is but rash and blind: Now where there is not so much as an *outward* appearance or visibility of Church membership, there is no evidence for us to build upon, and consequently no right judgment or well grounded *hope*. If therefore the Infants of Believers do not so much as visibly and *externally* belong to the Covenant and Kingdom of God, then they are not visibly in a state of Grace and Salvation, and so there is no visible ground of our hope touching their salvation. (2) Our hope must rely on a word of *promise*, or else it is but *vain* hope, it must have a word from God to bottom upon, as you may see in these Scriptures, *Rom.* 15. 4. 13. *Eph.* 2. 12. 2 *Thess.* 2. 16. 1 *Tim.* 1. 1. *Heb.* 6. 18. 19. 1 *Pet.* 3. 15. *Rom.* 4. 18. 20. Now take away the visible Church-membership and Covenant-interest of Believers Infants, and there is no promise in Gods word for their Salvation, for we find not any promise for the salvation of those persons that are without the visible Church of Christ, (3) If any shall object that God *hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*, *Rom.* 9. 18. And our Children may be elected for ought we know and consequently saved: This is nothing to the purpose, for still I demand what visible ground of hope you have in reference to your Infants, if they die in their infancy

fancy more than wicked men have; thus it may be said touching the children of *Jews*, *Turks*, *Heathens*, some of them may belong to the *Election* of Grace, the Children of the most wicked men may be elected for ought we know: But we speak now of a *revealed* declared interest in the *Covenant* of Grace, nor is Gods favour to believing Parents themselves a sufficient ground of Christian hope touching their Infants, but as it is bottom'd upon the *Covenant* and promise of God made with them and their seed, *Gen.* 17.7.

Quest. But where have godly Parents visible ground of hope (may you say) touching the salvation of their children that die in Infancy?

I answer, (1) God hath assured us in his word that he will be merciful to the seed of the godly, and that in opposition to the seed of the wicked on whom he will visit the sins of their Fathers. That the *seed* of the Righteous are *blessed, that their children are the heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward*, *Psal.* 127. 3, 4, 5. Here is visible ground of Christian hope in reference to our children, if they die in Infancy, or live to years of discretion, unless they prophanely reject the grace of the Covenant as *Ishmael* and *Esau* did. And the like may be said of *visible* professors that are baptized at years of discretion, for if they *Apostatize* from God (as many have done) the Lord will cast them off and reject them. (2) we have also visible ground of *hope* touching the salvation of our Infants from Christs *tender* and loving carriage towards *Infants* when he was upon earth. He took up *Infants* in his Arms, embraced and *blessed* them, sharply rebuked his *disciples* for their churlishness

kindliſhneſs towards them, and declared *that of ſuch is the kingdom of Heaven*, *Luk.* 18. 15, 16 O the tender compaſſions and bowels of our ſweet Saviour! He that was an *Infant* himſelf, is the Head and *Mediator* of the Church, and hath ſanctified the ſtate and age of Infancy: *Peter* alſo tells us after the aſcenſion of Chriſt, that *the promiſe is unto and to our Children*, *Acts.* 2. 38,39. And the Apoſtle *Paul* ſaith that *the children of a Believer are holy*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. And doubtleſs the *new* Teſtament adminiſtration (which we live under) is as free, merciful, and gracious or rather more free and merciful in reference to Believers and their *Infants*; than the adminiſtration of the old Teſtament was, and is not here viſible ground of hope? God is *love* it ſelf, and often compares his love to the love and pitty of a tender-hearted Father or Mother towards the Child, *Numb.* 11. 12. *Iſai.* 49. 15. *Pſal.* 103. 13. 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 7. (3) We find that ſome *Infants* were ſanctified in and from the womb, as *Jeremiah* and John *Baptiſt*, and children are as capable of regeneration and ſalvation as grown perſons: We are as *paſſive* in our Regeneration or firſt *Implantation* into Chriſt as a little child, and muſt receive the Kingdom of heaven as *a little child*, we find alſo promiſes of ſalvation in Scripture made to Houſholds, *Acts.* 16. 34, *&c.* And Chriſt ſaith to *Zacheus*, *This day is ſalvation come to this houſe foraſmuch as thou art a Son of* Abraham. *Luk.* 19. 9. And we are ſure that Infants are a good conſiderable part of the *houſhold.* (4) The Apoſtle *Paul* would not have Believers *mourn exceſſively for their dead friends*, *as thoſe that are without hope.*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 13. Be it

their

their children that die in Infancy or any other: The Apostle speaks of the dead in General, and therefore it must needs include the Species of Infants, Parents being more apt to grieve and mourn for their children than for any other. And here *Paul* speaks of the hope of their glorious Resurrection for whom they mourn'd: But now if our Infants do not visibly belong to the Covenant and Church of God, we cannot have a well grounded hope touching their salvation, but shall mourn for them as without hope if they die in Infancy. (5) *David* comforteth himself touching his dead Child, 2. *Sam.* 12. 23. that he should go to him though the child was not begot in lawful Matrimony: Now the meaning is not that *David* should be buried with the Child (for what ground of comfort doth this afford) but that he should be eternally happy with the child in glory: And doubtless the like or greater ground of hope every faithful Parent hath for his Children begotten in lawful Matrimony who die in their Infancy. We should likewise remember that children did appear and joyn with their Parents in standing Church ordinances, as solemn fasting and prayer, &c. 2 *Chron.* 20. 13. *Deut.* 29, 10. The Children that sucked the Breast were to be gathered to the solemn Fast, *Joel.* 2. 16. Which doth further evince and prove the visible Church-membership and Covenant-interest of believers Infants, and that there is strong ground of hope that God will bless them and bless these Ordinances to them: And if it be granted by our Brethren, that the children of the Godly do visibly belong to the Covenant & Church of God, and that we have visible ground of hope concerning them,

there will be an end of the controverſie about Infant-baptiſm amongſt judicious and ſober Chriſtians; ſeeing Baptiſm (which is the ſeal of the Covenant and of Church-membership) doth belong to all them that are viſibly in the Covenant and Church of God: For, if they have viſibly the grace of the Covenant which is the greater, then they ought to have the viſible ſeal of the Covenant which is the leſſer: I ſpeak now of Baptiſm (which is the firſt ſeal of Regeneration, wherein we are meerly paſſive) for as touching the other Sacrament, it is required that every man ſhould examine himſelf before he partake of it, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. Though we ſay and can prove, that the Infants of believers are Church-members in reſpect of Gods Covenant and grant, and ought to receive the ſeal of their admiſſion; yet they are not ſuch compleat members in all reſpects, as to capacitate them for all Church ordinances and priviledges together with their godly parents, till ſuch time as they themſelves profeſs their faith in the Covenant and promiſes of God, and engage themſelves to God in their own perſons when they come to riper years. Thus much of the third conſideration.

The Fourth Conſideration is this, That it is the duty and hath been the practice of believing parents from time to time (as we find in Scripture) to take hold on the Covenant and to exerciſe faith on the Covenant, not only with reference to themſelves but alſo with reference to their children; eying the Covenant of Grace as comprehending both themſelves and their Infant-ſeed: And according as they have improved and pleaded the Covenant with God, when they have made their addreſſes

to

to him, this, godly parents have formerly done, and this we ought to do ſtill. For the proof and confirmation of this point take a few inſtances out of Scripture. (1) We find *David* 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. pleading Gods Covenant made with him not only for himſelf, but for his houſe and children, though my houſe (ſaith he) be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant, it being uſual in Scripture when houſholds are ſpoken of, to intend the children (though they be not particularly mentioned) *Gen.* 30. 30. *Gen.* 45. 11, 18, 19. *Exod.* 4. 1. 2 *Sam.* 27. 3. *Prov.* 31. 15. *Luk.* 12. 42. Yea the children are chiefly intended by the houſhold 1 *Sam.* 20. 15. 2 *Sam.* 9. 9 1 *Kings.* 17. 12. 13. 15. *Pſal.* 127. 1. 3. *Prov.* 12. 7. *Iſai.* 31. 2. *Hoſ.* 1. 4. *Heb.* 2. 9, 10. 1 *Tim.* 3, 4, 5, and 1 *Tim.* 5. 4, 8, 14. compared with 2 *Tim.* 1. 16. children being the ordinary inſtruments to continue and uphold the houſe, as in natural and civil ſo in religious and eccleſiaſtical reſpects: And hence they are builders of the houſe both ways, as the hebrew radix ſignifies from which the word uſed for ſons and daughters is derived: And hence alſo we have that phraſe of Gods building the women houſes, *Exod.* 1. 21. And here in this inſtance of *David* that godly man [where he ſaith, although my houſe be not ſo with God yet *&c.*] he exerciſeth faith in the Covenant which was a gracious Covenant with reſpect unto his houſe, and therefore it is ſaid to be all his ſalvation and all his deſire not only touching himſelf but his houſe and children alſo: When he reflected upon the great diſorders and miſcarriages which were amongſt them. 2, To go up far high-

higher than *Davids* time. Our great Grandmother *Eve* alſo did thus eye and improve the gracious promiſe of God as made not only with reference to *Adam* and *her*, but to their Infant-Church ſeed: *Abel* being ſlain and *Cain* having rejected the grace of the promiſe; when her Infant *Seth* was born ſhe believed that God had for his covenant's ſake looked graciouſly upon her in that Infant of hers, and ſhe called his name *Seth*, for (ſaith ſhe) God hath appointed me another ſeed inſtead of *Abel* whom *Cain* ſlew, *Gen.*4 25. This ſhe ſpake of him not as a meer natural child (born according to the courſe of nature) but as of a Covenant and Church-ſeed, and therefore ſhe compares him to *Abel* and not to *Cain*, and calls him by ſuch a name as ſignified her faith touching the Covenant-ſtate and intereſt of this Infant, nor did ſhe thereby fail of her faith and hope as appears *verſ.* 26. This was likewiſe the practice of other parents and members of the Church of God: *Lamech*, when *Noah* was born, looking to the promiſe of God gave his Infant the name of *Noah*, *Gen.* 5. 28. 29. believing that that Child ſhould be as it were a plant to the Church and people of God, though the corrupt wicked world ſhould be deſtroyed. 4. So for *Abraham* the father of the faithful, there is no queſtion to be made but that he exerciſed faith in Gods Covenant both for himſelf and his ſeed, the covenant being expreſly renewed with him and his Infant-ſeed *Gen.* 17. 7, 8, &c. Which is an everlaſting gracious covenant: And this Covenant did comfort and ſupport *Abraham* in reference to his poſterity and made him put up that holy wiſh and prayer mentioned *ver.* 18. *O that*

Ishmael might live in thy sight! But yet long before *Abraham* was born, this was the practice of the servants of God, even in dark times; when the Covenant and promises were not so clearly revealed, and much more ought it to be our practice now.

5. It is further evident that the Saints of old did exercise faith, touching the Fœderal estate or Covenant-interest of their children, by comparing *Psal.* 102. 25, 26, 27, 28. with *Heb.* 1. 10, 11, 12. which referrs to Jesus Christ the Surety and Mediator of the Covenant, in whom they pleaded with God, and expected a Blessing from him for their children, and that by vertue of Gods Gracious Covenant: Nor was it meerly a temporal vanishing good to their children which they looked for and expected, but that their children might be established before God in the Spiritual Blessings of the Covenant, as you may see in that *Psalm* 102. *Verse* 25, 26, 27, 28. compared together. And there is the like ground for the exercise of our Faith in the Covenant, touching our Infants now under the New Testament Administration.

For the fuller satisfaction herein, I will lay down these five Propositions.

Propos. 1. That children are so comprehended and involved in their Parents, by the dispensation of God, that the Parents act is counted the childrens act, and the Parents neglect, the neglect; as we may plainly see in the case of Circumcision; *That Soul shall be cut off that is not circumcised, for he hath broken my Covenant,* saith the Lord: *Gen.* 17. 14. And yet the Infant had

ſelf was not capable of a perſonal neglect. And though our Saviour required perſonal Faith in grown ones, as to their own bodily cure; yet as for their children, it was accepted when their Parents believed on their behalf: *John* 4. 50, 51. *Mark* 9. *v.* 12. to 18. *Matth.* 15 22. to 29. Not that the Parents Faith is meritorious; only this we ſay, That upon a Believers accepting the Covenant for himſelf and his Seed, there doth reſult (in the ſence formerly expreſſed) not only a perſonal right to a mans ſelf, but a parental right alſo to his children, ſo as to render them capable of ſome privileges of the Covenant.

Propoſ. 2. That this is one part or branch of the Goſpel of Chriſt (which is to be preached in the extent and latitude of it:) Namely, that the Infants of Believers are Confœderates in and with their Parents, being taken into one and the ſame Covenant together with their Parents. What is the Goſpel of Chriſt, (I pray you) but good News, Glad Tydings, a Joyful Meſſage? And is it not good news that God hath made a Gracious Covenant with us and our children? And that God owns and hath reſpect not only to us, but alſo to our little ones? As when one conveys or makes over a Houſe or a piece of Land to a man and the Heirs of his Body; it is a far greater privilege, and more acceptable to the Grantee, than if it were only made over to the man himſelf. And in this latitude and extent the Goſpel or Covenant of Grace was eyed and improved by the faithful from the beginning of the world (as I have ſhewed:) And ſo it ſhall be in the purer times of the Goſpel, towards the

end of the world, when the power of Antichriſt is deſtroyed; and when *all the Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of Chriſt*: *Rev.* 11.15. When nations ſhall flow into the Church of Chriſt; *And the mountains of the Lords houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills. Iſaiah* 2. 2, 3. Parents then ſhall not only offer up and dedicate themſelves, but their children to the Lord; And ſhall not only plead the Covenant for themſelves, bnt for their children alſo before the Lord.

Propoſ. 3. This being the true Goſpel (in the full latitude and extent of it) our Bleſſed Saviour did accordingly command his Diſciples to preach and publiſh it to the Nations: *They muſt go and teach all nations, Baptizing them. Matth.* 28. 19. Compared with *Mark* 16. 15. *Gal.* 3. 8, 9. *Rom.* 1. 16, 17. They were to open and declare the whole Covenant in the largeneſs and extenſiveneſs of it: Namely, the Covenant that was made with *Abraham*, whereof this was the chief branch, *I will be a God to thee, and to thy ſeed after thee*: And this they were to teach all nations; whereas before the Church was limited to one nation; now their Commiſſion was extended to all nations, teaching and baptizing them; whoever in the Gentile nations ſhall take hold on the Covenant, they and their children ought to be admitted members of the viſible Church of Chriſt, and baptized. In the times of the Old Teſtament only one nation of the Jews were viſibly the people of God, in Covenant with him; but now

now other nations are taken in likewiſe according to that Goſpel promiſe: *Iſaiah* 19. 23, 24, 25. And indeed in every nation the children make a conſiderable part of the nation, and are always included under every Adminiſtration to the nation; whether Promiſes or Threatnings, Privileges or Burthens, Mercies or Judgments, unleſs they be particularly excepted. Children were included and taken in with their Parents under the former Adminiſtration, (as hath been clearly demonſtrated:) And there is no Scripture which proves that the Infants of Believers are excepted or left out in the New Adminiſtration of the Covenant; nay it appears from divers Texts of Scripture, that the Infants of Believers do viſibly belong to the Kingdom, School and Family of Chriſt. And whereas ſome of our diſſenting Brethren object, that it behoved the Lord to give a Precept for putting Infants into the New Adminiſtration of the Covenant, if he had intended they ſhould have been included; it may be eaſily anſwered, that they always had a right to be reputed as belonging to the viſible Church and Kingdom of God, and therefore there needs no new putting in by any new Grant, ſeeing there is no Barr made in Scripture againſt their viſible Church-membership: Once they were in, and where find we that ever they were put out, or excluded?

Propoſ. 4. As Chriſt commanded the Goſpel, or New Covenant to be thus preached (as extending to Believers and their Seed:) So it was accordingly preached and held forth by the Apoſtles in their Miniſtry. The New Covenant

being good news and glad Tydings, not only to the Believer touching himself, but touching his children also: As it was glad tydings to *David*, not only that God had promised mercy to himself, but to his House also, for a great while to come. 2 *Sam.* 7. 19. That the Gospel was thus preached by Christ and his Apostles doth plainly appear, when *Zacheus* was become a child of *Abraham*, (to wit, by Faith) the Lord Jesus promised Salvation to him and his House: *Luke* 19. 9. *This day Salvation is to this house*: (So it may be rendred) And the Apostle *Peter* *Acts* 2. 38. 39. Exhorts his hearers *to repent and be baptized*, and makes use of an Argument to perswade them thereunto, taken from the benefit that should redound to their Posterity, *for the promise is to you and to your children*: If the Jews that are near, or the Gentiles that are afar off obey the call of God, and own the Covenant in the new Administration thereof; then the promise is not only made to them, but to their children also: And thus *Paul* and *Silas* did preach the Gospel to the Jaylor, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thine house*: *Acts* 16. 31. And this is the same Gospel in substance which God preached long before to *Abraham*, when he promised to be a God to him and his Seed: This was that Covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ, long before the giving of the Law on Mount *Sinai*: *Gal.* 3. 16, 17. Which Covenant (being so confirmed) is no other than the Gospel of Christ, which is come upon the Believing Gentiles; *Gal.* 3. 13, 14. Where the Apostle tells

us that *the Blessing of Abraham* (which extends to Believers and their Seed) *is come upon the Gentiles.*

Propos. 5. It is therefore a sinful neglect, and undervaluing of the Grace and Salvation, and great privileges held forth in the Covenant, when Christian Parents do not believe the promises that are made not only to themselves, but to their Seed: That Salvation which the Lord Jesus himself, and his Apostles preached, and which those neglected. *Heb.* 2. 3. It was not barely Salvation it self, but the Covenant and Promise holding the same forth; for so we find *Acts* 28. 28. That the Salvation to be preached to, and heard by the Gentiles, was the Gospel-Covenant and Promises, which contain and hold forth that Salvation: And this is that Mercy, Riches and Salvation which is come upon the Gentiles. *Rom.* 11. 11, 12, 17, 19, 30. *Gal.* 3. 14. So likewise Gods Salvation in *Isaiah* 51. 6, 8. Is his Covenant or Promise, on which their Salvation doth depend, as *Calvin* observes upon the Text: So *David* speaking of the Covenant, in reference not only to himself, but to his House, saith, *This is all my Salvation, and all my desire, though he make it not to grow*: 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. This Covenant contained all his Salvation, which you see referrs not only to him, but to his House; and it hath been the privilege and practice of the Saints all along, thus to plead and improve the Covenant, which is the fourth Consideration that I have now done with.

Fifthly, Consider I beseech you, that the Saints

priviledges under the new and better administration of the Covenant are many ways augmented and enlarged of what they were in the times of the old Testament, whereas the opinion of those brethren who deny the Covenant-interest and Baptism of believers children doth exceedingly straiten and diminish the priviledges of believers: It being a great and comfortable priviledge to us that not only we but our children do belong to the visible church and kingdom of God, and have a visible right to and interest in the Covenant of Grace (whatever is pretended to the contrary) let these four things be diligently and impartially weighed by our brethren. 1. Would it not have grieved the believing Jews exceedingly, to have had their poor babes excluded from the outward priviledge and administration of the Covenant since the coming of Christ, when they were sure that their children had relation to and interest in the covenant and Church of God before the coming of Christ not only themselves in their own persons but their children also were comprehended in the visible administration of the Covenant: Truly in this case the believing Jews might well be offended (in a rational way) with the new administration of the covenant. Suppose a man in his former grant or conveyance had his children included, but now in a new grant they are left out and excluded will such a man be willing to give up his former grant and accept of the new grant, or rather will he not look upon it as a great infringement of his priviledge? It is just so here, if the Covenant now under the new administration do not externally belong to the Infants of believers (as it did to the

Infants

Infants of the Jews) it may well be look'd on as a great infringement of their priviledge. 2. Whereas our diſſenting brethren ſay that the *Jews* indeed had this priviledge, that their children were reckoned in the outward adminiſtration of the Covenant as branches of the Olive, but the believing *Gentiles* have not this priviledge. Is not this to abridge and ſtraiten the priviledge of *Gentile* believers, yea and of the believing *Jews* themſelves (with reference to their children) who take hold on Chriſt and the Covenant now under the new adminiſtration thereof? But let any man produce if he can one text or ſyllable out of the word of God, where the priviledges of Believers under the Goſpel are ſtraitned and cut ſhort touching their Infants viſible right to the covenant and Church of God and the initiatory ſeal thereof: Once the children of believers had this priviledge, let it be ſhewed when and where it was taken away and aboliſhed. 3. Such as go about to deprive believing Parents of ſo great a ſhare of their comfort (in reference to their poor babes) had need produce clear teſtimony out of Gods word to convince and perſwade them; becauſe next to the glory of God and the ſalvation of their own ſouls, their childrens intereſt in the Covenant is one of the greateſt benefits and privileges which believers have from the Covenant of Grace, namely, to have their children viſibly to belong to Gods family and kingdom and not to Satans, children being a great treaſure to their Parents and the ſalvation of their ſouls very dear and precious to them. But 4. The Apoſtle *Paul* tells us plainly, that *the bleſſing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles through*

through Jesus Christ, *Gal.* 3. 14. Which shews that in this respect the priviledges of believing Gentiles are not lessened or abridged (now under the new Testament administration) what is this blessing of *Abraham* but Gods gracious Covenant and promise that he will be a God to us and to our seed? If this covenant and promise belong not now to believers children in their Infancy, then saints under the New Testament do not fully partake of the blessing of *Abraham*, then are they deprived of a great and precious privilege which did belong to believers in the old Testament. If it be said this blessing comes upon believers children when the children themselves believe, the same may be said of the children of *Pagans*, who when they actually believe may as well claim the promise to belong to them as believers children may when themselves do believe. And therefore certainly this blessing of *Abraham*, this covenant blessing doth include and not exclude the Infants of believers, otherwise they had that advantage and priviledge before the coming of Christ which they have not since. And shall we think that the Lord Jesus who is a propitiation for the sins of the world, and hath broken down the partition wall that was between Jews and Gentiles, who was so compassionate and tender-hearted to all sorts of people, when he was upon earth, did come into the world and die the cursed death of the cross that he might lessen and abate our privileges and comforts and the grounds of our hope touching the Covenant-interest and salvation of our poor Infants? far be it from us to entertain such a thought.

Sixthly, Consider further, that the Jews them-

selves

es in the later days shall be converted to Christ with
ect unto, and by vertue of the Covenant, which was
e with their Fathers: *Rom.* 11. 25, 26, 27, 28.
ere the Apostle saith, *That when the Fulness of the*
iles is come in, then shall all Israel be saved: and this
ll be in respect of Gods Grace and love, even his Co-
nted Grace and Love with their Fathers: If the
ren of godly Parents be not in Covenant before they
ally believe, (according to the opinion of our dif-
ing Brethren) truly then, there are two or three dif-
ties in this eleventh Chapter to the Romans, which
ot be answered nor cleared. The first Difficulty is
. How God in the New Testament should convert the
erity of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* out of his love
heir Fathers, and with respect to his Gracious Cove-
, made with their Fathers; and yet no child is par-
r of Grace by the Covenant of his Fathers, till him-
doth actually believe: How can this hang together?
ot Conversion and Faith here made a fruit and effect
Gods love, his covenanted love unto their Fathers, and
the Fathers sake unto their Seed? Secondly, If God
is Covenant hath no respect here to the natural Seed,
Branches, (as our Brethren pretend) why then should
Apostle *Paul* call the Jews the natural Branches of
good Olive tree, and make their Conversion much
e kindly, and as it were more easie and natural, than
Conversion of the Gentiles was? Thirdly, if the
rivance of fœderal intereſt from believing Parents, to
r natural children (now under the New Testament) be
ged and rejected, how can the Apostles Argument here
answered; whereby he proves the Conversion and
lness of the Jews in future ages, from the holiness of
r godly Ancestors in times past? *If* (saith he) *the*
g away of the Jews was the reconciling of the
ld; what shall the receiving of them be, but life
the dead? *Rom.* 11. 15. That there shall be such
ceiving of them, he proves from the Holiness, which
the Institution of God) is derived from the First
s to the whole Lump; and by the Covenant of God,

from

from the Root to the Branches: *Verse* 16. For (sai he) *If the first fruits be holy so is the whole lump,* *if the root be holy so are the branches*: The force strength of this argument depends wholly on the Coven of grace and the continuation thereof from godly pare to their natural children now in the days of the new T stament; and this receiving or taking in of the Jews the latter days doth take in their children also by ver of Gods Covenant made with their godly ancestors, accordingly it is prophecied and promised, that the Je shall be converted and their children also shall be as afo time. *Jer.* 30. 20. And that in *Ezekiel*, *chap*, 37. 20. 21, 25, 27. is very remarkable, when the scatter tribes of *Israel* and *Judah* shall become as the two stic joyned in one (in ecclesiastical respects) the Lord w reference to that time, renews the old charter of *Ab hams* Cevenant to be a God to them: In which prom he includeth their children, they being also together w their Parents scattered among the heathen, and to be g thered under Christ as their Prince and Head, which g thering and conversion of theirs, shall be by vertue of Covenant made with their fathers, so that the child belong to the Covenant and the Covenant belongs to th before they actually believe.

Seventhly, Consider the great absurdities and evil co sequences which must needs follow from the denying believers Infants visible right to the Covenant of gr and their visible Church-membership. 1. It exclu them all from the ordinary way and means of Salvation being neither in the visible Church of Christ (out of wh ordinarily there is no salvation) nor in the Covenant grace so much as externally in respect of Gods visible d pensation. In this case what ordinary means is left their salvation? the promises of God (we know) are m to the Church; and God hath appointed and ordered spiritual good things to be conveyed to us and ours i Covenant way and by virtue of the Covenant, 1 *Sam.* 5. *Ephes.* 3. 8, 9. *Isai.* 42 6. *Isai.* 49. 6. 7, 8. *Zach.* 11. Christ himself is the Mediator of the new Cove

Teſtament *Heb.* 9. 15. *Heb.* 12. 24. If therefore Be-
ers Infants have no viſible intereſt in this Covenant,
they have no viſible intereſt in Chriſt as Mediator, for
is Mediator of no other Covenant but this; the buſineſs
ich he tranſacts as Mediator is to confirm this Covenant
d in the behalf of all thoſe for whom he is Mediator,
9. 24. *Ijom.* 15 8. Nor can any partake of the ſpi-
of God and influence thereof, but by and from the
enant of grace, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. Nor of a glorious re-
ction and bleſſed eſtate but by vertue of the Covenant,
ll be their God, *Luk.* 20 36. 37, 38. *Heb.* 11. 16.
37. w 26. 6. 7. Now if this ſort of perſons (I mean the
ſcatter ies of Infants) be excluded from a viſible intereſt in
wo ſhi Covenant and promiſes, truly then there is no viſible
ord w nor means left for their Salvation. 2. If only adult
Ab n Gentiles who actually believe and are converted
n pro ade nigh by the blood of Chriſt in reſpect of Cove-
ther w and Eccleſiaſtical holineſs, it will argue that that ſort
to be erſons only were actually ſtrangers before, and not
which ſeed with them, (whether individually or ſpecifi-
tue of y conſidered) *Eph.* 2. 11 12, 13. Nay this ſuppoſeth
child Chriſt took down the partition wall (as it ſtood) only
s to th een grown Jews and adult Gentiles, but as for the
dren of believing Gentiles, it argues that either there
evil co no ſuch partition wall betwixt them and the Infants
nying e Jews. or that it remains untaken down to this day:
of gra thus to ſuppoſe, what is it elſe but a vain imagination
exclu ary to the word of God? 3. To deny the Covenant-
lvation ſtate of believers Infants implyeth that there are two
of wh ſort Covenants of grace (beſides the ſubſervient Cove-
venant on mount *Sinai*) one Covenant made with the faith-
iſible d their ſeed of old, another with us (excluding our
is left t ſeed) and theſe two Covenants eſſentially different
are m from the other: But this were abſurd to imagine,
rdered ſtill being the ſubſtance of the Covenant of Grace both
ours i the old and new adminiſtration thereof. The new
Sam. of ſealing the Covenant by Baptiſm (when firſt inſti-
. *Zach.*) was preciſely with reſpect to the Jews, Gods peo-
Cove old, *Joh.* 1. 33. *Matth.* 3. 1. *John.* 4. 1. compared
with

with *Matth.* 10. 5. 6. to shew us that no other Covenant in substance is now sealed by Baptism than what was made formerly with *Abraham* and his posterity, *Luk.* 1. 55, 68. 69, 70, 71, 72, 73. *Acts.* 2. 38, 39. Now if there was one and the same Covenant in substance, it will unavoidably follow, that either the Infants of the Jews were not in Gods Covenant together with their parents (whereas it is evidently proved that they were) or that their being in Covenant was meerly ceremonial and typical and so is abolished. But grant that the way of sealing the Covenant to them was ceremonial, yet what ceremony could there be in this great promise, *I will be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee in their generations?* Doubtless this contains a principal substantial part of the Covenant it self: Or else it will follow that the Infants of believing Gentiles are now in Gods Covenant and members of his visible Church, together with their Parents the Covenant being still one and the same in substance. 4. If the Infants of believers now have no visible right in the Covenant and Church of God, will not God hereafter be made a respecter of persons, looking at the Jews and their children in the times of the old Testament as both in Covenant with him, but not so regarding the Infants of the Covenanting believing Gentiles in the times of the new Testament? And whereas he is said to be a God to all the families of his people, *Jer.* 31. 1. according to this opinion he is not a God in Covenant to any more than particular persons actually believing and professing their faith, and not so much as by outward ecclesiastical administration to the children of his people, which are the choicest part of the top of their families whereby the Lord God builded up their families. 5. This will also abolish and take away that distinction which all along hath been observed in and throughout the holy Scriptures, for by this means the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent in the posterity and branches thereof will be mingled and confounded together. There will be no distinction of the Seed of God and of men, of the seed of *Isaac* and *Ishmael* in the Infant part thereof, no Church distinction of children

dean and unclean: which the bleſſed Apoſtle counts an abſurd thing, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. *Elſe your children were unclean* [i. e. like the children of Pagans, and infidels, in no better caſe than they] *but now they are holy.* All mens children by nature are children of wrath one as well as another: And therefore if we take away the diſtinction between Infants and Infants in reſpect of their Covenant-intereſt and Church-membership, then they are mingled and confounded together, I mean the Infants of Turks, Pagans and Chriſtians one as well as another, as having their actual ſtanding in the viſible kingdom of Satan.

Conſider (I humbly beſeech you in the bowels of Chriſt) what hath been ſeriouſly written unto you, and the Lord give you much of that wiſdom which is pure and peaceable eaſie to be intreated; and without partiality. I will now conclude this paper with two or three inferences or conſectaries which may be genuinely deduced from the foregoing conſiderations.

Firſt, Hence we have cauſe greatly to admire the riches of Gods grace in the Covenant as extending not only to us but to our children alſo: O the tender mercy and compaſſion of God towards our little babes! O what honour hath God put upon his ſaints thus to entayl the viſible adminiſtration of his grace on them and theirs! He hath not ſo dealt with Pagans and unbelievers, what advantage hath viſible believers and their Infants above others? much every way, to them are committed the Oracles of God, they have viſible right to and intereſt in the Covenant and promiſes of God, *Rom.* 3. 1. 2, 3. As the Infant-children of heathen and wicked men do viſibly belong to the kingdom of Satan, ſo the Infant-children of the godly, do viſibly belong to the kingdom of Chriſt, *Luk.* 18. 16.

II. Let believers therefore duly and conſtantly plead and improve the Covenant of grace in the new diſpenſation of it not only for themſelves, but for their little ones, for as the Covenant is held forth in ſcripture in this large and comprehenſive manner, ſo accordingly we ſhould plead it with God in the exerciſe of our faith and prayers. And if Chriſtians would believe more and diſpute leſs, I doubt not but it

it would contribute much to the silencing of this and the
Controversies among the Saints: Lord, thou hast made a
cious Covenant not only with me but with my poor bab
remember thy promise and make it effectual to their so
let them not only partake of the outward administration
of the inward saving grace of the covenant, although
house be not so with God as it ought to be yet Lord rem
ber thy gracious Covenant for me and mine.

III. Christian parents should be hence encouraged to
vote their children to the Lord and to educate & train th
up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, *Eph.6.4.* seeing t
are taken into Christs school and family, and are owned
him as members of his visible kingdom, O let not par
suffer their children to take Gods name in vain, to pro
the Lords day, to abuse and revile his servants: I *know* (
the Lord) *that Abraham will command his children and*
household after him to keep the way of the Lord. Gen. 18.
chuse you this day (saith *Joshua*) *whom ye will serve, but a*
me and mine house we will serve the Lord, Jos. 24. 15. T
should be our resolution, and accordingly we should re
our children the fear of the Lord and instruct them con
ing the nature, properties, privileges, and duties of the
venant of grace and the seals thereof, Baptism and the L
Supper, as the Jews instructed their children touching
institution, use and end of the passover. *Exod* 12. 14.

IV. and lastly, We should hence be admonished to
ware of and avoid those doctrines that straiten and cut s
the Saints privileges under the new Testament adminis
tion and exclude and shut out our Infants from a visibl
terest in the covenant of grace, and so leave us witho
ny visible ground of hope (from Gods revealed will in
Scriptures) touching their salvation, if they happen t
in their Infancy: for what visible ground of hope can t
be in reference to them if they have no visible right to
Covenant and promises of God. But blessed be the nam
the Lord who has not left us without visible ground of
touching our poor Infants. Nor should we mourn for t
(so dying) as those mourn that are without hope.

FINIS.